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THE GREAT DUTCH SCHOOL.

IT has been truly said, that "there can be no great school of art in a country that is not in accord with its civilization," and Taine, in "The Philosophy of Art in the Netherlands," says that, "at the time when the War of Independence begins, the painters of the North are laboring to convert themselves into Italians like the painters of the South," very much as some of our own artists are doing when they try to be Frenchmen or Germans.

But after the year 1600 a complete change took place, and the great Dutch school had its rise, of which Mr. Taine further writes :

"It exacts and provokes the representation of man as he is and life as it is, both, as the eye encounters them—citizens, peasants, cattle, shops, taverns, rooms, streets and landscapes. There is no need to transform them in order to enoble them; they are satisfied if they are worthy of interest. Nature, in herself, whatever she may be, whether human, animal, vegetable or inanimate, with all her irregularities, minutiae and omissions, is inherently right, and, when comprehended, people love and delight to contemplate her. The object of art is not to change her, but to interpret her; through sympathy it renders her beautiful. Thus understood, painting may represent the housekeeper spinning in her rural cot, the carpenter planing on his work bench, the surgeon dressing a rustic's arm, the cook spitting a chicken, the rich dame washing herself; all sorts of types, from the rubicund visage of the deep drinker to the placid smile of the well bred damsel; every scene of refined or rustic life—a card party in a gilded saloon, a peasant's carouse in a base tavern, skaters on a frozen canal, cows drinking from a trough, vessels at sea; the entire and infinite diversities of sky, earth, water, darkness and daylight. Terburg, Metzu, Gerard Dow, Van der Meer of Delft, Adrian Brouwer, Schalcken, Franz Mieris, Jan Steen, Wouverman, the two Ostades, Wynants, Cuyp, Van der Neer, Ruysdael, Hobbema, Paul Potter, Backhuysen, the two Vanderveldes, Phillip of Koenig, Van der Heyden, and how many more! There is no school in which artists of original talent are so numerous.

"When the domain of art consists, not of a small summit, but of the wide expanse of life, it offers to each mind a distinct field; the ideal is narrow, and inhabited only by two or three geniuses; the real is immense, and provides plans for fifty men of talent. A tranquil and pleasing harmony emanates from all these performances; we are conscious of repose in looking at them. The spirit of the artist, like that of his figures, is in equilibrium; he should be quite content and comfortable in his picture. We realize that his imagination does not go beyond. It seems as if he, like his personages, were satisfied with mere living. Nature appears to him excellent; all he cares for is to add some arrangement, some tone, side by side with another, some effect of light, some choice of attitude. In her presence he is like a happy wedded Hollander in the presence of his spouse, he would not wish her otherwise; he loves her through affectionate routine and innate concordance; at the utmost his chief requirement of her will be to wear, at some festival, her red

frock instead of the blue one. He bears no resemblance to our painters, expert observers taught by aesthetic and philosophic books and journals, who depict the peasant and the laborer the same as the Turk and the Arab—that is to say, as curious animals and interesting specimens; who charge their landscapes with the subtleties, refinements and emotions of poets and civilians in order to rid themselves of the mute and dreamy reverie of life. He is of a more naïve order; he is not dislocated or over-excited by excessive cerebral activity; as compared with us he is an artisan; when he takes up painting he has none other than picturesque intentions; he is less affected by unforeseen and striking detail than by simple and leading general traits. His work, on this account, healthier and less poignant, appeals to less cultivated natures, and pleases the greater number."

THE MABUSE AT BURLINGTON HOUSE.

SOME faint idea may be formed of England's wealth in the works of the masters, from the fact that although for sixteen years there has been an annual drain on the private art collections for the exhibition at Burlington House, "the present exhibition not only shows no falling off from most of those which have gone before, but its general standard is even higher than that of most of its predecessors, and among the two hundred and fifty-six pictures of which it is composed, a very small number indeed are unworthy of a place in any permanent collection in the world."

"The most astonishing picture in the galleries is the great Mabuse, from Lord Carlisle's gallery at Castle Howard. This painting is said to have cost the artist seven years of unremitting labor. The subject is, "The Adoration of the Magi." It measures three feet seven inches by five feet six inches, and is signed in two places; exhibits the fullest attainments of the artist in his first period, before his visit to Italy."

"It sets forth the incidents of the Gospel story within the ruins of a palace,—the lowly mother and the Holy Babe, the offerings of the three kings from a far land, and the worship of the shepherds, with a multiplicity of figures, human and angelic, elaboration of sumptuous garments and objects, the beasts of the stall below and celestial visions in mid-air,—all with that strange admixture of homelessness and dignity that belong to the early Flemish school, together with a rich, sonorous color, and a solid, well fused impasto, that make pictures beside it look thin and pale."

THE article headed "The Water Color Exhibition" was written with the expectation of its being published before the close of the exhibition, but as it contains some thoughts that are of general application, we retain it, although it may appear to be "a day after the fair."—ED.

ONE of our artists recently refuted some adverse criticisms by a sledge-hammer like answer. His illustration in one of our weekly papers was criticised as being entirely out of proportion, and he now simply publishes the photograph from nature from which his drawing was accurately made.